

TASK 2

Read the following extract about succeeding in language learning. For questions 1-8 below, decide which of the options (A, B or C) is true. The first question (0) is an example. Write your answers in the box below.

Language Learning Success for English Speakers

If you're a first-time language learner, you know that emotional ups and downs come with the territory. When you understand a concept or begin to comprehend the language, you may experience feelings of exhilaration. However, these are often followed by moments of frustration and discouragement, during which you might feel as if you will never master the concepts and attain the ability to understand and communicate effectively. Below are some time-tested, research-verified approaches that will help mitigate potential frustration and will increase your ability to succeed in language learning.

It is natural to feel uncomfortable in a language class. You're used to being in classes where the mode of communication -- the language of instruction -- is a given.

In a language course, however, it is the mode of communication itself that is the focus of instruction. For this reason, a language course is different from most other courses you will ever take. Not understanding and making mistakes -- things that are negative learning indicators in other courses -- are a very natural part of the language learning process. Accept the fact that you will not understand everything. In fact, at the very beginning, you will not understand much at all.

Remember that during the initial period of adaptation your ear and your mind are adjusting to the sounds and the rhythm of the language. Though you will not understand all of what is being said, you will be amazed at your increasing ability to make sense of the language. Remember that the only way to learn the language is through practice, practice, and more practice; in the course of practicing you will make many errors ... and you will learn from them.

Research shows that language students learn more effectively and retain more when they study frequently and for shorter periods of time than if they study infrequently for extended periods of time. Try to study each day, and whenever possible, several times a day. This means, for instance, doing a few homework exercises each day rather than doing all homework assignments the night before they are due.

In addition, there are many otherwise mentally "idle" moments during the day when you can work in some studying. For example, you can review vocabulary while eating breakfast, recite the alphabet while showering, count your steps as you walk between classes, name as many object as you can in the target language on your way school, take your vocabulary flash cards with you on a road trip.

There are many moments during the day when you can squeeze in a few minutes of practice time. Through the repetition of material, it will become increasingly familiar, until it eventually becomes an automatic part of your language repertoire.

Vocabulary is the most essential element of communication. The more words you know, the more you can say and understand. The absolute best way to learn vocabulary is through the use of flash cards that you make yourself. Purchase a set of 3 x 5 index cards and cut them in half. (This makes them small enough to carry everywhere.) Write a vocabulary word on the front and its English definition on the back. As you learn more information about each word (e.g. plural forms of nouns, principle parts of verbs), you can add these to the cards.

There are many ways you can use flash cards as a learning tool. To help you learn and remember noun genders, for example, you can color code the nouns by gender, either by using colored cards or colored ink. When studying, organize words in meaningful groups (e.g., by noun gender, in thematic categories, regular verbs vs. irregular verbs). Shuffle the cards or groups, so that you use the stack(s) in a different order each time. Use the cards in both directions: first look at the foreign language words and try to recall the English definition. Then shuffle and look at the English definitions and attempt to remember the foreign language words. Flash cards offer many possibilities. Take advantage!

In the course of a conversation, it is not practical to look up noun genders or fret over verb tenses. But assignments offer you a golden opportunity to practice your language skills in a deliberate manner.

When working on your own, you have the luxury of time. Look up words and genders you don't know. Refer to charts and other resources available to you. This will reinforce the material and eventually it will become automatic. If you never look things up or simply guess, you will be strongly reinforcing errors and you will never learn proper forms and words. Later on read the instructor's feedback and ask clarifying questions when necessary.

Everyone has strengths and weaknesses when it comes to language learning. Learning with others helps decrease knowledge gaps and gives you opportunities to actively discuss concepts and material covered in class, thereby increasing the chances that you will remember it. You will benefit from the knowledge and abilities of your classmates, as they will from yours.

Each person learns at a different pace. Try not to get frustrated if someone else in class seems to be progressing more quickly than you. You might find that you have a knack for grammar but have difficulty with speaking. Or you may find that you understand things perfectly in class, but when it comes to the homework assignments, you feel lost. Strive to identify your own personal strengths and let these help you in your learning process. If you are a visual learner, for example, write things down and try to associate words with images. At the same time, strive to identify your own personal learning barriers and make efforts to overcome them. For example, if you tend to be quiet in classes and often refrain from participating, force yourself to sit at the front of the classroom.

If your ultimate goal is language fluency, as it is for many students learning a language, then it is important to know that you will become more fluent more quickly if you increase the amount of contact you have with the language. You can start by simply practicing the language with a classmate outside of class. You can befriend native speakers in your community or attend a local foreign language conversation hour, if one exists. Rent a movie in the target language, or listen to authentic audio or video online. (Many foreign television and radio stations have streaming or archived audio and video programs).

Remember that you won't be able to understand everything, and you might not understand much at all at first. Nonetheless, these experiences will make you increasingly familiar with the sounds, rhythm, and intonation of the language. Increased exposure to and active practice with the language will help you develop skills more quickly.

First, you are able to speak a little and understand nothing. Then you are able to understand far more than you speak. Then you become conversational, but it requires quite a bit of mental effort. After that, you are able to speak and understand without conscious mental effort (i.e., you don't have to translate words into your native tongue in your mind). Once you are able to speak and listen without thinking about it, you will begin to actually think in the foreign language itself without effort. Once this happens, you're really hitting a high level.

And the final level? Believe it or not, being able to follow a conversation between a large group of native speakers is the last piece of the puzzle to fall into place. Or at least it was for me. Once that happens, and you're able to interject, come in and out of the conversation at will, you are pretty set. After that, there is not really anywhere else to go without living in the country for at least a year or two and reaching complete fluency.

EXAMPLE:

- 0. In the introduction to the tips it is said that...**
- a. ... the feelings of hopelessness can be shunned with some strategies.
 - b. ... the feelings of euphoria are the most common ones.
 - c. ... the blissful feelings come after downheartedness.

1. How is a language course different from other types of courses?

- a. You won't understand it as easily.
- b. The mode of communication is unfamiliar.
- c. Tuning into the language requires making complete sense of the language.

2. As for the time devoted to studying...

- a. Swotting or grinding can sometimes be efficient.
- b. The writer has the intuition that regular study is more efficient than cramming the day before the deadline.
- c. Combining everyday tasks with some core learning and practice can help improve your language abilities.

3. The use of flash cards...

- a. is the best way to practise a language.
- b. is very useful to practise irregular verbs or noun genders when learning English.
- c. is a handy resource of practice.

4. When doing your written homework make sure you...

- a. do it thoroughly.
- b. read the instructor's feedback.
- c. stick to a tight time schedule.

5. Practising in groups...

- a. helps to learn by heart.
- b. helps to overcome your strengths and weaknesses.
- c. is an asset to everyone participating.

6. Identifying your weaknesses can help you...

- a. tackle them more effectively.
- b. make up for your strengths.
- c. overcome classroom rivalry.

7. Your exposure to the language...

- a. via movies will immediately increase your fluency.
- b. will have a knock-on effect on your fluency.
- c. should mainly focus on conversation exchange.

8. As for the phases,

- a. being able to interact with many native speakers is undoubtedly the eventual phase.
- b. speaking effortlessly entails the absence of translation.
- c. understanding and speaking develop at the same rate.

Question	0.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
Answer	a								
Teacher only	✓								

soluciones

TASK 2

Question	0.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
Answer	A	B	C	C	A	C	A	B	B